

At Eternity's Gate

By

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EXT. BUS STOP. DAY

1

An old man, DONALD late 70's, is the only person standing at a bus stop. It's overcast, cars driving past through the water on the road.

Donald is wearing an old fashioned cap, wearing the suit he always wears. To his left is a large, brown leather suitcase. It's worn and is obvious it's been used for several decades.

Donald looks for his coach, excited and nervous, but mostly nervous

A Coach pulls up.

2

INT. COACH. DAY

2

Donald walks as quick as he can up the steep steps, keen not to keep the other passengers waiting.

As he gets to the gangway it's clear it's a popular coach trip. Nearly every seat is taken up by pensioners, they all look at him, with curiosity and the faintest of smiles. A second later and the chatter continues.

Donald looks for a seat, finding one at the back, two seats to himself.

He takes off his hat is physically now relaxed.

The COACH DRIVER, overweight and sporting a Teddy Boy haircut flicks his roll-up from the first step out of the door and walks up the steps and back into his seat.

The microphone starts up, chatter slowly stops.

COACH DRIVER

Right. Anyone for Loch Ness?

The coach of passengers with a mixture of "Yes", "Aye" and "Finally"

3

EXT. MOTORWAY. DAY

3

The Coach driving up the motorway

4 INT. COACH. NIGHT 4

Donald stirs awake from a nap. He looks around, clearly a little confused as to where he is. Then he realises.

He looks around. Some people are sleeping, others are chatting quietly.

He wipes the condensation from his window and looks out at the dark.

5 EXT. HOTEL FRONT. NIGHT 5

The Coach Driver is unloading luggage with a roll-up in his mouth.

All of the passengers are now off the coach. A few with bags, a few still looking.

Donald spots his suitcase, looks at the label and picks it up.

6 INT. HOTEL RECEPTION. NIGHT 6

It's a 3 star hotel, at best. Well worn tartan carpet, there's a musty atmosphere as 45 pensioners attempt to queue at the desk to get their keys.

Most of the other pensioners seem to know each other. Donald looks like the new kid at school, not too comfortable.

A 50 year old Scottish RECEPTIONIST, looking flustered and obviously not entirely pleased to have so many people check in at once.

Donald reaches the desk.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi there. Your name please.

DONALD

Mr Donald Gough

RECEPTIONIST

Mr Gough, let's see. Room 25, 1st floor, last room on the left.

DONALD

Thank you

Donald takes the key and heads for the stairs.

7 INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT 7

Donald opens the door, searching on the walls for a light switch he finds it.

The light reveals a tiny bedroom. A single bed, table beside the bed with a small kettle, a cup and saucer, a plastic basket of tea, coffee, sugar and 2 milk sachets.

The decor is slightly more depressing than the reception. Still has the look of a musty place.

Donald seems to like it though.

8 INT. HOTEL ROOM BATHROOM. NIGHT 8

Donald has changed into his pygamas. They were clearly purchased 30 years ago.

He is standing over the toilet. A hole in the back of his pygamas exposed a white, saggy buttock.

He is motionless for a while.

DONALD
(quietly)
Come on.

After some straining, a pathetic trickle of urine hits the bowl.

9 EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE. DAY 9

It's an overcast day. Donald, wearing the same clothes as the day before looks out at Loch Ness, the first time he has seen it on this trip.

The other pensioners are getting onto the coach, chattering. The coach driver standing beside the doors with a roll-up looking distinctly uninterested.

Donald walks off in the other direction from the coach.

10 EXT. WOODLAND. DAY 10

Donald has taken his suit jacket off and now holds it in his arms. He sports a brilliant white shirt, red tie and braces.

He walks between the trees, downhill towards the Loch.

11 EXT. LOCHSIDE. DAY 11

Donald walks carefully along the shores, taking care over the large stones and pebbles.

He sits on a large boulder with a flat top, perfect for sitting down, he lays his jacket at the side and looks out to the still Loch.

12 EXT. LOCHSIDE. DAY 12

It is now a beautiful day. A hot summers day. A slim built, handsome boy of around 17, YOUNG DONALD and a gorgeous GIRL of the same age are splashing and playing in the Loch. The dress and hairstyles are 40's in style.

They look totally in love.

Donald sits and looks at his younger self and his girlfriend, smiling and reminiscing.

Young Donald and the girl embrace and kiss the most amazing kiss either of them will ever have.

As they hug Young Donald rests his head on the girl's smooth and slightly sunburnt shoulder and looks directly into Donald's eyes.

Young Donald's smile fades and turns to one of pity and disappointment.

Donald looks back at him, slightly ashamed and apologetic.

Donald turns to his right, a Loch cruise has interrupted his vision. As he turns back to look at his younger self, they are gone. The water is still and the sun has been replaced by nothing but grey clouds.

13 INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY 13

Donald is lying on his bed, shoes on and still fully clothed. Curled up in the fetal position on top of the freshly changed sheets.

14 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT. NIGHT 14

Donald, still in the same suit is sitting at the end of 8 large tables, full of 45 pensioners noisily eating their evening meal.

Donald sits alone. Quietly eating his meal. It seems everyone is having a conversation except him.

15 INT. HOTEL BAR. NIGHT 15

GABRIEL, the young Romanian bartender is taking bottles from their optics and replacing them with new ones.

He looks around to the empty bar, grabs a glass and helps himself to a double of brandy. He necks it quickly.

16 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT. NIGHT 16

Donald looks at his meal. A pitiful steak pie, 4 carrots and 24 peas. No garnish.

He sticks his fork into the pie and puts it in his mouth.

Someone says something on one of the other tables that causes a huge laugh from everyone close to the joker.

Donald swallows the piece of pie too quickly. He attempts to breath but nothing comes in or out of his lungs.

Panic appears on his face, he looks around, but no one sees.

He gets up, serviette still hanging from his collar.

He tries to breath again, nothing.

Donald walks towards the Restaurant doors towards the bar. He is aware he is choking but doesn't want to cause a fuss.

17 INT. HOTEL BAR. NIGHT 17

Gabriel walks out from behind the bar to a table near the window, passing the door between the Restaurant and Bar. He is carrying a table cloth and spray bottle.

From the corner of his eye, he sees the odd walk that Donald now has, sort of a panicking, pleading walk.

Gabriel and Donald's eyes meet. Gabriel looks at his confused for a second, then realises that he hasn't seen the old man breath.

Donald points frantically at his throat.

Gabriel panics. He drops the spray bottle and cloth but stands still, petrified with fear.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIEL
 (shouting)
 Morag!!

Donald is now within touching distance and grabs Gabriel with surprising strength on his shoulder.

Gabriel grabs Donald by the arm and slaps him between the shoulder blades. Nothing

GABRIEL (cont'd)
 Morag! Help me!

Donald looks very purple, the lack of breathing is starting to hurt.

Gabriel raises his arm up, clenches a fist and punches Donald in the back with all of his might.

A piece of steak flies out of Donald's mouth, hitting the window and falling to the floor.

Donald takes the most amazing breath of air he has taken since he was born.

GABRIEL (cont'd)
 (panting, relieved)
 Sir, are you OK?

DONALD
 Yes. Yes. Thank you. Thank you son.

18 INT. HOTEL BAR. NIGHT

18

Donald is sitting on a chair near to the door. Glass of water in his hand.

He is dejected. He has never felt so pathetic and pitiful in his life.

Gabriel walks over with a brandy glass, generously filled.

GABRIEL
 Here you go sir. I think maybe you need this more than me.

Donald looks at the glass and swaps his water for it.

DONALD
 God bless you son. Thank you.

Gabriel smiles at Donald. Donald looks at him, looking at the well-meaning pity from the stranger.

(CONTINUED)

Gabriel walks away.

Donald puts the brandy down on the table next to him without drinking it.

He is the only person in the bar.

Donald's chin starts to wobble. Suddenly he breaks down in tears, completely loses his control and cries as if he's given up entirely. It's gut-wrenching seeing this man lose his dignity.

He puts his hands around his head and crouches over, sobbing.

FADE OUT